

one, between said load lock chamber or said unload lock chamber in the atmospheric atmosphere and said cassette in the air.

31. The transfer method according to claim 30, including the further step of carrying in and carrying out said substrates to be processed or said substrates having been processed, one-by-one, between said load lock chamber or said unload lock chamber in the vacuum atmosphere and said cassette in the air.

32. The transfer method according to claim 30, including the further step of carrying in and carrying out said substrates to be processed or said substrates having been processed, one-by-one, between said load lock chamber or said unload lock chamber in the vacuum atmosphere and the transfer chamber in the vacuum atmosphere. --

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further clarify the definition of the present invention. Specifically, Applicants have amended each of claims 3, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 26 to recite that the apparatus has plural vacuum processing chambers or to recite treatment of a sample in plural vacuum processing chambers, and to recite, variously, that the sample is carried into a vacuum processing chamber of these plural vacuum processing chambers. In addition, claim 3 has been further amended to recite that the

cassette is placed on and removed from the cassette mount unit while maintaining a surface of the samples substantially horizontal.

Moreover, Applicants are adding new claims 27-32 to the application. Of these newly added claims, claims 27 and 30 are independent claims, and each is directed to a transfer method in operating a vacuum processing apparatus, with the vacuum processing apparatus including specific components including a transfer chamber connected to plural vacuum processing chambers; a cassette table for mounting in air a cassette which receives plural substrates to be processed or substrates having been processed; load lock and unload lock chambers for carrying in and carrying out the substrates to be processed or the substrates having been processed; one atmospheric transfer apparatus for transferring the substrates to be processed or the substrates having been processed between the cassette in the air and the load and unload lock chambers; and gate valves provided respectively at atmospheric and vacuum sides of the load and unload lock chambers, to change over the load or unload lock chamber to atmospheric or vacuum atmospheres. Claim 27 recites that the transfer method includes carrying in and carrying out the substrates, one-by-one, between the load or unload lock chamber at the atmospheric atmosphere and the cassette in the air. Claim 30 also recites carrying in and carrying out the substrates, one-by-one between the load or unload lock chamber in the atmospheric atmosphere and the cassette in the air.

Claims 28 and 31, dependent respectively on claims 27 and

30, each recites the further step of carrying in and carrying out the substrates, one-by-one, between the load or unload lock chamber in the vacuum atmosphere and the cassette in the air; and claims 29 and 32, dependent respectively on claims 27 and 30, each recites the further step of carrying in and carrying out the substrates, one-by-one, between the load or unload lock chamber in the vacuum atmosphere and the transfer chamber in the vacuum atmosphere.

The undersigned notes that the above-identified application is a Continuing application in a line of applications. Particularly in view thereof, Applicants respectfully request a personal Interview in connection with the above-identified application, prior to a first Office Action on the merits in the present application. See Manual of Patent Examining Procedure 713.02. Representatives of Applicants in Japan intend to attend this Interview; accordingly, the undersigned respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned in connection with scheduling the Interview, sufficiently prior to the date that the Examiner must act on the above-identified application so that representatives of Applicants can schedule a trip to the United States for the Interview. The Examiner is thanked in advance for his cooperation with these requests.

In view of all of the foregoing, entry of the present amendments, and contacting the undersigned for setting up an Interview prior to a first Office Action on the merits in the above-identified application, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an

extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414C14) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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